

## The Skills of Soccer

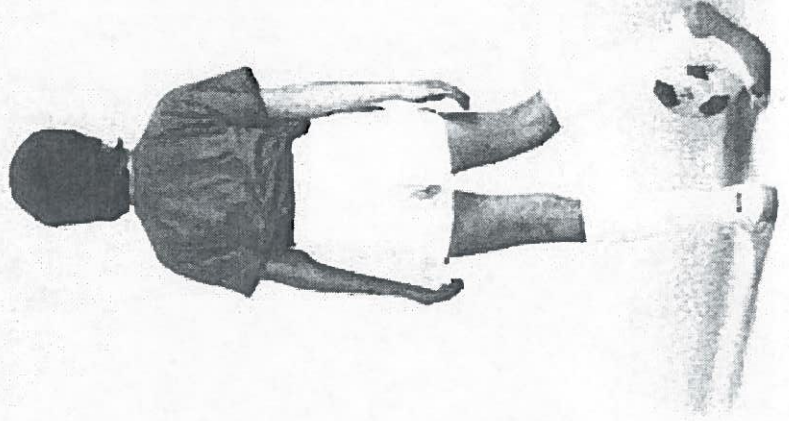
**OUTSIDE OF THE FOOT PASS**—The outside of the foot is often used for passing and the rules for using it are somewhat more difficult to teach, but nevertheless important:

1. When kicking the ball with the outside of the foot, the **ANKLE MUST BE LOCKED**. (Have you heard this enough?)
2. The player should point his/her toe **DOWN**, and inward.
3. The non-kicking foot should be turned slightly **AWAY FROM THE BALL**. That's different, eh? By stepping away, it will give the player a bit more room for the kicking foot to come through.
4. The heel of the kicking foot, when brought back to strike the ball, should be brought back **BEHIND THE KNEE OF THE NON-KICKING FOOT**.
5. Of course, we have our players strike the center of the ball, but this time with the "Little Piggy toe."



3. The ball is struck below the ankle bone and closer to the middle of the foot.
4. The ball is struck as close to the midline as possible.
5. After striking the ball, the player should raise his/her knee up which will give the ball top spin, resulting in the ball moving more quickly.
6. The lower leg should swing through like a pendulum.
7. The non-kicking foot is pointed where? That's right, in the direction the player wants the ball to go.

If you ask your players to **FREEZE** after kicking the ball, you will be able to see if their technique is correct or not. If correct, the inside of the foot will be facing the receiver.





**CHIP PASS**—When the ball is lofted with backspin, it's called a chip. Here are the steps in teaching it:

1. The ball is struck with the **INSIDE EYELETS** of the shoe.
2. When bringing the kicking foot back, bring it back to the **BACKSIDE**.
3. The knee must **SNAP** when coming forward. Again, the best way to see if the technique is correct is to **FREEZE** the player after contact. Remember, the backspin will result only if the ball is struck below the midline with a **LOCKED ANKLE**.

## RECEIVING

Now that you've taught your kids how to pass it and head it, let's deal with the guy on the other end—the **RECEIVER**.

In the past, receiving has been called trapping, though it doesn't matter what it is called. The skill demands mastering the art of gathering in the ball in order to do something else with it. Stress that **RECEIVING ALWAYS LEADS TO SOMETHING ELSE**; in that way your players are motivated to learn and work on this important skill. Simply put, when receiving the ball, the player will redirect the ball and either dribble, pass, or take a shot.

Here's how to teach receiving:

1. Players must be able to receive the ball with every legal body part—foot, thigh, head, chest, etc.
2. Players must "read" the flight or run of the ball so that he/she can center the body on the ball.
3. Once the ball flight or run is read, the player can decide which body part will receive the ball.
4. Next, your player is to **PRESENT** that body part to the ball.
5. As the ball makes contact, the body part must be **DRAWN BACK** slightly for the "give" that results in control.

6. A short **HOP** just before contact will help your players stay on their toes and off their heels, thus cushioning the blow and helping with control.

## **RECEIVING WITH DIFFERENT BODY PARTS**

**SOLE OF THE FOOT**—It's easiest to teach players to receive with the bottom of the foot. Simply put, have each player lift their toe off the ground slightly as the ball is kicked their way, and cushion the ball as it makes contact.

Have your players pretend the ball is an egg and they will understand how lightly it must be touched.





# Control

When passing the ball, great care should be given to how the player receiving the ball is going to be able to control it. Good control is the means of maintaining possession and developing the team attack. Again, the shaping of the body in order to effect control of the ball is essential.

## Methods of Control



1. Chest – leaning back to cushion flighted pass; (introduce with gentle service).



2. Thigh – raised to receive and control aerial passes.



3. Instep – raised to control aerial passes.



4. Side of foot – extended forward to receive and to control.

## CUSHIONING

The first 4 methods of control use "cushioning" as the method of controlling the ball. The controlling surface is presented towards the ball and withdrawn on contact to take the pace off the ball.



5. Sole of the foot – to wedge and push the ball into space.



6. Inside and outside of foot – to wedge and drag the ball into space.



7. Chest – leaning forward to control a ball which is bouncing off the ground.

## TRAPPING/WEDGING

The final three methods of control make use of trapping and/or wedging. Part of the body is used to wedge or trap the ball between the ground and the controlling surface of the body.

## Coaching Points

1. Make an early selection in method.
2. Get in line with the flight of the ball.
3. Keep the eyes on the ball.
4. a) Relax the controlling surface or,  
b) Wedge the ball.
5. Pass the ball accurately or keep possession.